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Message from Minister Shirley Bond

Honourable Shirley Bond, Minister of Education

Today, British Columbia will be a sea of pink.

That's because people have been inspired by a story from Cambridge, Nova Scotia, where a new Grade 9 student arrived at Central Kings Rural High School wearing a pink shirt and the school's bullies went to work. Two Grade 12 students noticed and took a stand against the bullying by asking everyone to wear pink — they even handed out free pink shirts! The boy was relieved and the bullies were never heard from again.

Here in B.C., the Province has declared today, February 27, Anti-Bullying Day. The move helps fulfil one of this government's platform commitments, and it supports legislation passed last spring requiring every school to have a code of conduct featuring a zero-tolerance policy on bullying.

Students who feel safe are free to achieve their best in school. Anti-Bullying efforts will also serve to build a better British Columbia — a British Columbia made up of caring communities. Join thousands of us as we wear pink today to take a stand against bullying. Read more.

Province Continues to Empower Parents

A Parent Information Network has been added to LearnNow BC , a partnership between the Province and the Virtual School Society. This network is for parents wanting up-to-date information on their child's learning and school experience. It also gives parents of K–12 students online access to educational resources. Read more or visit www.learnnowbc.ca.

Education Minister Shirley Bond participates in an ActNow BC "energy burst" with more than 130 parents from around the province on January 28, 2008 during the second annual Parent Congress in Vancouver where the Parent Information Network was unveiled.

HOT TOPIC

The Internet is a powerful tool, especially in education. At the same time, the World Wide Web is another arena for bullies and predators.

According to recent polls, almost three in four children use the Internet

entirely unsupervised, and more than one in five has already met someone in person after meeting online.

Following the recent Parent Congress, where cyber bullying and safety were discussed, the Province announced that all B.C. public independent and band schools will soon receive and distribute parents' guides to help children safely use the Internet.

The Canadian Centre for Child Protection, a charitable organization dedicated to the personal safety of all children, developed the guides for parents of children ages 8–9, 10–12 and 13–15.

According to the polls, most parents could benefit from better information with which to teach their children about personal safety. These new Safety and the Internet guides will help parents understand what their children are doing online, and the various associated risks.

The guides, specific to Internet use, will complement other resources, including a new brochure for parents and general bullying and harassment guides currently being updated by the Province.

As more children gain access to Internet-ready-and-connected computers, the number of opportunities they have for creativity, learning and fun will increase. To reduce the risks children face, their parents need to be aware and prepared to talk about this with their children. Read more.

Reading Corner

Juice is a lovable tomboy who struggles in school. Her troubles may stem from her family's poverty and her father's inability to read, but, despite these disadvantages, Juice will have to confront the challenge and learn. Her mother, the family home, and her future depend on it. This book demonstrates the strength of family and the importance of literacy. It is by a Newberry-award-winning author and appropriate for readers in grades 4-5.

Just Juice
Karen Hesse